PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to all the kind and thoughtful members who sent Marge and me Christmas greetings. They were truly and deeply appreciated.

Right now we are passing through the "Times That Try Mens Souls", hibiscusly and weatherwise. We have had worse winters which presented greater problems of plant protection, but this one has been hard on many of our members and their plants. Cheer up, spring is not far away.

This is also the time when every member should be spreading some optimism about the coming show year. It appears now that every chapter will have a show which is good news indeed. As always happens during the winter, whether it be hard or mild, a few members become discouraged, their interest in hibiscus and the A. H. S. begins to lag. Let us do all we can to promote interest in and adherence to the Society. Encourage the despondent ones who have lost plants, strengthen the will of those who are wavering and congratulate the lucky ones who have had bloom all winter.

Between now and the Board of Directors meeting on March 1st., I hope every one will give some thought to A H S problems in the areas of show rules, classes of exhibitors, ways of improving our nomenclature etc. A little time spent in organizing your opinions and ideas before the meeting will be a big help to you in presenting your side of any question you wish to bring up at the meeting. In other words do a little homework on A H S problems.

My very best wishes that 1969 will be good to you in all ways.

See you in Leesburg.

Lee Trainor

HIBISCUS - ITS HISTORY AND ITS CARE

Hibiscus belongs to a large and wonderful plant family which includes such useful members as cotton and okra, not to mention hollyhocks! These and hundreds of others are members of the "Mallow" family.

The beautiful flowering shrub we think of when we say "Hibiscus" is known to botanists as "Hibiscus Rosa-sinensis", and in this name will be found the beginning of its history: for "Rosa-sinensis" means "Rose of China".

Plants were taken from China and Southern Asia by the earliest travelers to many of the Pacific Islands -- especially to Hawaii where they flourished until they are almost the symbol of that tropical island. They were then taken from here to Central America and the Carribean Islands.

It is not known exactly when Hibiscus was first taken into Europe and America, but it was being grown in greenhouses and was fully described by the early eighteenth century. According to Ross Gast, there is published evidence that George Washington knew and grew Hibiscus.

The first listing of this plant in Florida was made in 1896 by P. W. Reasoner, a nurseryman on the West Coast of Florida. A few were grown by some of the early settlers before this.

Mr. Reasoner listed a number of varieties that we still grow and gave them the names we still use: Lambertii, Versicolor, Baptistii, Brilliantissima (which we have shortened to Brilliant).

A few years after his first listing of pinks and reds, he visited Jamaica where his mind wandered from his new bride long enough for him to notice and arrange to bring back the first salmon colored one. This we know as Euterpe.

In 1896 railroad magnate Henry Flagler inported

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